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Edited by Dr. George Stob

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

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The Burden of the Laboring Man

by George Stob

IN SPEAKING of the burden of the laboring man do not mean the physical burden of back-breaking abor, or of the long, hard hours that dull the uman spirit.

Much of that burden has been taken away by he social progress of the last half century or more. mprovement in labor relations, achieved through he sweat and blood of organized labor, has taken way much of the reason for Edwin Markham's rotest against society for making of the working an "a slave of the wheel of labor," and for giving im the aching stoop that showed "humanity be-rayed, plundered, profaned, and disinherited."

There is another problem that burdens the labor-ng man. It is not the problem of how to save ne body, how to get a living wage, how to find alutary working conditions and enough leisure to eep one's health. It is now the problem of how keep the soul, how to remain Christian while orking for a satisfactory wage, and how to keep ne's spiritual health in the face of the prosperity he workingman enjoys. And on this score, it eems to some, the laboring man needs protection nd defense, not against the predatory employer, ut against the very labor unions which have otten him his gains and which still stand for him s guarantors of economic and social justice.

This, in any event, is the major preoccupation in ne Christian Reformed Church with the burden f the laboring man. It is feared that the laboring an, by his membership in the labor unions, is ompromising his Christian character and principles nd witness, and that he is in peril of selling his oul for a mess of labor pottage. I venture to uggest in passing that this is an over-simplification f the laboring man's moral and spiritual dilemma. is soul, and that of his fellow Christians, is threat-ned by the whole influence of our secularist culture, nd not only by his involvement in the labor union. nd if he is able, by God's grace, to keep his soul gainst the influence of the whole world "that lieth n the evil one," he should be able by the same race to keep his soul in an area which is only a art of that world's life.

But even if the laboring man's union affiliation n't the *only* problem, or the *major* problem, for hristian living in our day, it is *a* problem. How nall a man be a Christian and do his Christian uty in the American labor unions?

One answer to this is that the Christian ought o give up the existing labor unions as hopelessly icked. Since is appears that he cannot get these labor unions "to bow before the authority of God's Word," he ought to advise his fellow Christians to withdraw and set up separate Christian labor associations. This is the theory that underlies the organization of the Christian Labor Associations in both the United States and Canada. And this is the officially preferred and recommended position of the Christian Reformed Church, though it is allowed (for bread and butter reasons, say some) that neutral labor union membership cannot be strictly forbidden.

American Christian Labor Institute

Somewhat more recently there has been another proposal for an organized effort on the part of Christian workingmen to meet the problem of the Christian and his labor union affiliation. In March 1956, Rev. Lambertus Van Laar, then minister of the church in Brockville, Ontario, offered a proposal for the organization of what he called the American Christian Labor Institute, defined as "an instrument to witness for Christ *within* existing unions."

Rev. Van Laar takes his starting point in the Calvinistic conviction that Christians must witness for Christ in every area of public life. On this duty all Calvinists agree. "The only question is: *How* must we witness?" This question is asked, quite characteristically, only with reference to the laboring man.

Rev. Van Laar seems to adopt another common, but more questionable assumption, namely, that Christian witness, to be effective, must be organized. He notes that "there has been no organized and unified Christian testimony *within* American unions." This seems to him necessary, because "the witnessing of individual Christians within the union is very feeble and ineffective, for the simple reason that the average Christian within the union often does not know, and therefore cannot judge, the moral and religious implications of a given labor policy with which he is confronted." Therefore, "thousands and thousands of Christian men in the American unions are without instruction and guidance as to the moral implications of union tactics and policies. They are moving upon the great American Labor Scene as 'sheep without a shepherd.' They have a right to receive Christian leadership!"

There has been one endeavor in the Christian Reformed Church to organize Christian laboring men for effective witness. That is the Christian

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Labor Association. But Rev. Van Laar finds this quite unsatisfactory for practical as well as principal reasons. Says Rev. Van Laar: "The present method of witnessing for Christ in the labor world, by means of separate Christian labor organization, has proven to be ineffective and seems to be getting nowhere from a practical standpoint. It is very doubtful that a separate Christian labor union is the right method to follw in witnessing for Christ on the American Labor Scene. It strikes us as being an European method applied to a peculiar and distinctive American situation. Let us not ignore the fact that there are thousands of sincere Christians in the American and Canadian Unions, including some Union Leaders!"

Rev. Van Laar does not believe that the "antithesis between the world and God's people can be maintained" only by "Separation" and "Separate Organization." He believes that "the Scriptural principle of the antithesis can be practiced more effectively by means of an American Labor Institute." "A strong American Labor Institute, with God's blessing, can prove to be a mighty bulwark against many un-Christian activities and policies of the existing unions, and at the same time be a great instrument for Christian guidance, so desperately needed by Christians who are now members of the AFL and CIO."

What, then, is the American Christian Labor Institute which Rev. Van Laar proposes? It is an organization of Christian laboring men, who organize themselves into "an instrument to witness for Christ *within* existing unions."

The basis of the organization would be the Bible, acknowledged to be the infallible Word of God, and the final standard of judgment in all matters. Each member must solemnly pledge, "to abide by the teachings of God's Word in all labor questions."

As for composition of the ACLI, the following membership organization is proposed:

1. Active members are Christian laboring men who agree to: (a) Pledge obedience to "the teachings of God's Word in all labor questions." (b) Follow the offical counsel of the Institute given in specific labor problems.

2. An Executive Committee, consisting of a full-time secretary and board of directors elected by the active membership.

3. Contributing members, who help finance the Institute, but have no vote.

An important element in this proposed organization is "A Faculty of Christian Labor Experts." These are to be "college-trained specialists in Social and Economic Problems," full-time men who are pledged to uphold the basis of the Institute. They are to be appointed by and responsible to the Committee.

The task of the proposed Institute would be defined as follows:

1. To carry on propaganda for the growth of the Institute.

2. To conduct "research in labor questions," specifically, "constant study of especially the moral and spiritual implications of labor questions." Fruits of this study would be published in a Christian Labor Magazine.

3. To give guidance to its membership. This would involve: (a) "On the spot investigation of labor difficulties," and (b) "Official counsel given to the members involved, which they are pledged to follow."

Reaction to the Proposed Institute

The reaction to this proposed Institute and its program was various. In *The Banner* of May 17, 1956, Rev. H. J. Kuiper, who was then still its Editor, spoke appreciatively of the effort to establish such an organization, though he held also to the right and necessity for separate Christian Labor organizations as well. Rev. Kuiper's argument for the ACLI seems, however, to be a somewhat secularist interpretation of the Christian method: "In this age of bigness, of huge organizations, of combines, trusts, gigantic corporations, nation-wide labor unions, Christians must pool their spiritual resources and speak in concert, with one voice against the evils of the day, and in defense of truth and righteousness."

Rev. Van Halsema, Editor of *De Wachter*, took note of the fact that on the 25th Anniversary of the CLA there was cause to ask what the reason might be for the relatively meager vitality of the CLA which didn't seem to grow. Is the method wrong? Should we follow the method proposed in the American Christian Labor Institute? Rev Van Halsema judged that we must face the question: In which direction shall we go? and invited discussion of the matter.

Many of Rev. Van Laar's Canadian colleagues looked upon the proposed ACLI as a compromise with Satan, and as treason within the walls of the kingdom of God, and one of them prayed for its destruction before it was born. Mr. Joseph Gritter, Secretary of the CLA in the United States judged that ACLI could have its merits. It was indeed, something like the "Christian Worker Groups" approved by the CLA in places where a CLA local was impossible. Mr. Gritter insisted however, that Christians in the neutral unions must try to get these unions "to bow before the authority of the Word of God," and failing that withdraw from them and give full support to the CLA. If that were done, said Mr. Gritter, the CL

vould have nothing to fear. Eventually all Christian workingmen would in that case find themselves n the CLA. Mr. Gritter feared, however, that an rganization like the ACLI might be "nothing ther. . . than a 'front' through which membership n unChristian organizations would be covered up nd approved" (*De Wachter*, June 19, 1956, pp. 98, 399).

Reflection of a Desperate Need

I am in sympathy with Rev. Van Laar's spirit nd intentions in proposing the American Christian abor Institute. He served us well by setting forth is proposal. For whether it is adopted or not, it nay be observed that he has given strong witness o some significant truths. It is needful that we hould be told: (1) That "Separation" and "Separate Organization" are not the only way, nor even he most effective way of registering a Christian vitness in the life of our world; (2) That our people vho are members of neutral labor unions need guidnce and instruction in the Christian task rather han condemnation for their membership in such nions; and (3) That God is not without his own eople in the middle of the world's life, there being thousands of sincere Christians in the American nd Canadian Unions, including some Union Leadrs!"

But the most significant thing about the proosal for an American Christian Labor Institute s that it points up the fact that there is a crucial nd desperate need that is not being met in the hristian Reformed community. The Christian aboring men in our community are in need of ounsel and guidance in their daily calling. As nembers of a strategic class group in our society, vhose action has important economic and political eference, they play a crucial part in the whole of ur modern life. And, as Rev. Van Laar's proposal mphasizes, the labor questions of our day do have noral and spiritual as well as economic and cultural implications. The Christian laboring man, vho is a significant part of the American labor novement, needs counsel and help if he is to act ffectively and responsibly in his labor union. But he simple fact is that this need is not being met in he Christian Reformed community. The Christian eformed laboring man gets virtually no help or ounsel either from his church or from organizaions within the church community.

It might be thought that the church, which as over the years made so many pronouncements bout the laboring man's union affiliations, might ry to give the laboring man some help in his roblem. On this score, however, its studies and eclarations have been disappointing. For the most art, in her preoccupation with the "labor problem," he Christian Reformed Church has belabored the uestion of the compatibility of church membership with labor union membership. The church has spoken at length to the laboring man on abstract theological and ethical issues, but has scarcely ever come down into his situation to discuss with him the concrete social and economic problems on which he needs specific guidance. The church has offered disquisitions and judgments about the meaning of the antithesis and the implications of corporate responsibility, but has shown little interest in a serious study of the history of labor-management relations, of the nature, causes, and process of economic conflict, or of such specific matters as strikes, picketing, boycott, union shop, closed shop, or any of the numerous ingredients of the actual labor problem.

It may be said, in fact, that the pronouncements and decisions by the church on the labor problem have for the most part been prejudicial to the interests and needs of those church members who are members of the CIO and AFL. The basic counsel of the church to her laboring men is: Withdraw from the "neutral" unions and establish or become members of a Christian labor association. This helps the CLA, and as such is ecclesiastical legislation favorable to a "party" within the church, but it does not one whit help — rather very much prejudices — the problem of the member of the "neutral" union. For the rest the church only tolerates membership in the "neutral" unions, but with the warning that it is a morally and spiritually perilous association, and with the presumption that membership in such unions will quickly lead Christians into sin. This means that the church must keep particularly close watch over those who are members of the CIO and AFL, and the bulk of synodical pronouncements on the labor problem are concerned, *not with helping the union member* to discharge his difficult calling, but *with instructing the church* how to watch over and discipline him.

The basis for this watch is established in two general pronouncements. One is that "church membership and membership in a so-called neutral labor union are compatible as long as such union gives no constitutional warrant to sins, nor shows in its regular activities that it champions sin." The other is the doctrine of corporate responsibility, which judges a man guilty of the sins of the organization of which he is a member. Other synodical pronouncements get down from the high level of the general and abstract to the concrete and particular, and instruct the church how to exercise this watch so as to discover whether or not her laboring men are sinning. Synod declares that consistories should "examine the rules of each organization to which a member of its church belongs, and see whether members are accomplices in actions which are in conflict with God's command, and if so to deal with them along the lines of ecclesiastical displine" (*Acts* 1928, Art. 108, p. 96).

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In another decision, consistories and classes are instructed to take careful note of the practices of all labor organizations existent in their respective communities to determine whether membership in the church and membership in such organizations are compatible" (*Acts* 1943, Art. 172, p. 103). It has been cause for vigorous complaint from CLA supporters that consistories and classes have not followed these instructions with even moderate zeal. If they should, however, it can well be imagined that the laboring man would scarcely be inclined to welcome these ecclesiastical observers and investigators as friends and counsellors to him in his daily problems.

The Failure of the Church and Its Organizations

In view of the crucial importance of the laboring man's role in our society, other churches in our country have appointed permanent commissions on labor and industry, not only to give help and guidance to laboring men, but also to assist the Church in knowing how to bring her Christian witness to bear on the problems of society. It is interesting to observe that in an earlier era the Christian Reformed Church appeared to be moving somewhat in that direction. In 1906 it decided to appoint "a standing Committee of three persons, with mandate to make a careful principial and historical study of the labor movement, from the point of view of the employer as well as the laboring man," and with instructions to provide intelligence with reference to the labor movement and to serve as a bureau of information. The same year it resolved also to "urge all leaders to make a serious study of the labor movement, and in preaching and in other ways take full account of it, for the enlightenment and guidance of the congregations" (*Acts of Synod* 1906, Art. 106, p. 66).

It does not appear, however, that anyone made "a serious study of the labor movement," except the Rev. Johannes Groen, one of the members of the standing committee appointed by the Synod of 1906. Rev. Groen set forth the fruits of his studies in an extensive series of articles in *De Wachter*, in 1914-15, from which it appeared that Rev. Groen had been led to believe that the position taken by the Christian Reformed Church — only tolerating "neutral" union membership — was too extreme a position. But Rev. Groen's articles were quickly answered by abstract theological arguments, advanced by the Rev. Henry Danhof in a succeeding series of articles in *De Wachter*, and by Prof. Louis Berkhof, whose long and weighty lecture, "The Christian Laborer in the Industrial Struggle," was published in 1916. Rev. Groen's effort to move the church to a more realistic confrontation with the concrete labor problem, though a prodigious and noble effort, failed to achieve its end. The church returned to the habit of meeting moral problems with abstract theological and ethical argumentation, and we have been bogged down in that process from that day to this. The laboring man, therefore, has been getting a good deal of education (good and bad) in making theological and ethical judgments, but he has not been getting counsel and help in the critical problems which he meets in his everyday relations.

Nor has the Christian Reformed laboring man recieved help and counsel from any organization within the Christian Reformed community. One might hope that there would be some guidance for the Christian laboring man in the pages of the *Christian Labor Herald*. But that journal is a trade journal, published by the Christian Labor Association, and committed to the condemnation of membership in the CIO and AFL. The *Christian Labor Herald* does, indeed, discuss labor problems, does offer articles on the history of the labor movement and does provide some information about current labor developments. But the *Christian Labor Herald* is dominated by the conviction that "separate organization" is the only answer, and concerned to oppose the "neutral" unions, so that there is limited value in it for those who want a total and objective account and analysis of labor problems. And those who are members of the CIO and AFL will find little encourgement to seek counsel from a paper which takes the position that the big reason for membership in these unions is the "bread and butter" reason, and which declares that 99 percent of the Christians in these unions are not trying to give the Christian witness.

One might hope that the American Federation of Reformed Men's Societies, which must count in its membership many laboring men, would give a good deal of prominence to the economic and social problems in which men are daily involved. Up to the present this has been a rather forlorn hope, however. The American Federation of Reformed Men's Societies is dominated, insofar as it undertakes to discuss social and economic issues, by the position that comes to expression in the Christian Labor Association. Apart from that, it is not apparent that the *Federation Messenger*, organ of the above-named Federation, has given much space to the discussion of the labor situation which involves so many Christian Reformed men.

What Can Be Done

It is this failure of the church and of organizations associated with the church to sympathize with and share the problems of the great body of our laboring men that prompts Rev. Van Laan's proposal of an American Christian Labor Inst

ute, as an "instrument for Christian guidance, so lesperately needed by Christians, who are now nembers of the AFL and CIO." It might well be sked, however, whether we should go to the trouble nd expense of setting up a new organization for he guidance of Christian workingmen. Could not he existing organs and agencies be used for that urpose? Since the Lord made so many laboring nen, and since the church makes them one of the rime objects of ecclesiastical attention, would it ot be well to introduce into *The Banner* and *De Vachter* departments that deal with current labor ssues and give guidance to those who are members f existing unions? Or, since the *Federation Mes-enger* is pre-eminently the one organ for our men, nd the paper of the Men's Federation, would it ot be well for that agency to enlist the help of alvin College and Seminary professors, and other xperts on social and economic problems, to give nformation and guidance on labor problems and o provide materal for study and discussion in the Men's Societies? There is still another possibility. ince we have Study Committees for so many, and or lesser things, might it not be well for Synod o appoint a Standing Committee on Labor and ndustrial Relations? This Committee could not nly make its own studies, but also consult and call ttention to studies that have been and are being nade by other church commissions, including those f the National Council of Churches. These studies hould be made available to ministers as well as to he laboring men, for it is not to be forgotten that fter all there is need for instruction and guidance n laboring problems among the ministers — who live far away from the actual problem of he laboring men, and yet are supposed to give im moral and spiritual guidance in his daily alling.

There is, however, one difficulty: If the Christian eformed Church and agencies within that com-nunity are to do what Rev. Van Laar is persuaded eeds doing, the church will have to alter her tand on labor union membership. Rev. Van Laar's all for an "instrument for Christian guidance, o desperately needed by Christians, who are now nembers of the AFL and CIO," is predicated on position which the church does not hold. Rev. an Laar's position is that "it is very doubtful that separate Christian labor union is the right method o follow in witnessing for Christ on the American abor scene." Van Laar contends that the method f witness in the existing unions is "more Scrip-ural, and perhaps more difficult to carry out in ractice than that of separate organization." On hat basis there is some reason for an effort to ive guidance to men who work within the existing nions. The official position of the Christian eformed Church, however, is that our people hould "establish and promote definitely Christian organizations" wherever possible. This has been reinforced in 1956 by the resolution that "Synod encourages the formation of Christian labor unions as instruments to apply the teachings of Scripture in the field of labor" (*Acts*, 1956, Art. 144, p. 106). The same Synod did, indeed, exhort "such Christians as are members of a neutral labor union to be diligent in professing Christ and Christian principles within these unions." But this is not the church's major interest. The church's major interest is that Christians should withdraw and set up or take membership in separate Christian associations. One cannot expect the church to do other than to put most of her effort into supporting the major interest of her official position. The major interest is not to teach men how to live and witness within existing unions. It is to teach men how to get out of them and into Christian labor associations.

Maybe the ACLI will be needed after all. But if it comes into existence, it will rival, oppose, and contradict the church's official position and counsel. This is something that will have to be understood for a right assessment of the problem involved in setting up an American Christian Labor Institute within the Christian Reformed community.

Whose Conscience Must Determine?

There is one serious question that I have about Rev. Van Laar's proposal, and that is the element of pledge that he brings into it. One of the conditions for membership in the ACLI is that each active member should give "a solemn pledge . . . to abide by the teachings of God's Word in all labor questions." It might be observed that that pledge isn't necessary. Every Christian makes the solemn pledge, in God's house and in the presence of God's people, to abide by the teachings of God's Word in *all* questions. Even so there might not be so much objection to repeating this pledge before an association with reference to a specific area of living, except for the fact that this pledge demands more than one gives when he pledges allegiance to God's Word before the Church of Christ. Rev. Van Laar's pledge requires that one should abide by *a certain interpretation* of the teaching of God's Word with reference to a specific situation. This becomes very plain from the further pledge required of active members of the ACLI namely, "to follow the official counsel of the Institute given in his specific labor problem."

This means that the member of the ACLI must agree to having his conduct in a specific instance governed by the collective conscience of the Institute. In instances in which the moral demand is perspicuously clear, there is no problem, since in such instances the collective conscience of the Institute and the individual conscience of the Institute member will be the same. But many moral

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problems are quite individual and existential, and no body of people, no matter how competent and consecrated, are able fully to enter into them and give an authoritative and compelling answer for another. Apart from the fact that it is impossible for others to enter fully into another man's problem and make another man's moral decisions, no man has a right to surrender his conscience to another or to transfer the responsibility of choice from himself to others. Conscience and moral choices are strictly individual. The Christian community must and does, indeed, help to form the consciences of its members and to direct their moral choices. But the decision of conscience and the moral choice must be that of the individual. After counsel and guidance is given, the Christian community has, certainly in problematical instances, done its full duty — and the member of the community must be left to decision before the face of his Lord. We who are children of the Reformation ought to know how profoundly this is the heart of the Scriptural teaching concerning the freedom and responsibility of the Christian man. "Who," says Paul, "art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth." And again Paul says: "Let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. For each man shall bear his own burden."

It is this imposition on the Christian conscience by others that already exists as an evil in synodical legislation and practice, and it ought not to be widened and confirmed. Perhaps we should rather try to remove it. There is no warrant in Scripture for the synodical decisions which urge "all our people, wherever possible, to establish and promote definitely Christian organizations in the social sphere." This is not consistent with good sense or with the teaching of Scripture just cited above. It should be noted that in making this judgment and putting forth this exhortation, synod is doing something which is beyond its competence. No synod, and certainly not a synod which is made up predominantly of ministers and laymen who have little experience with or relationship to the actual labor problem, is in a position to say whether or not any of "all our people" should establish, promote, and affiliate with a Christian labor association. This is a decision which can be made only by the individual Christian laboring man. Synod cannot make the decision that belongs to the individual. And what Synod *cannot do,* it plainly *may not do.* Nor may Synod, no matter how competent she feels, ever impose her will on the conscience of the Christian in a matter which depends on individual Christian choice in a concrete situation. She must insist, rather, that no Christian surrender his freedon and responsibility of moral decision in such matters

This is the more so in the case of the labor ques tion, since the matter is, by Synod's own admis sion, not such as permits an absolute judgment an declaration. It is allowed that the Christian ma properly discharge his daily calling either in Christian labor association or in one of the exis ting unions. If that is so, what right has Syno to exhort "all our people" to establish and promot definitely Christian organizations? There is onl one thing that Synod can and may say in thi instance, and that is: The question as to whethe one should affiliate with a Christian labor associ ation or one of the existing unions is somethin for the Christian to decide in his own conscience the church can in this instance demand only tha each Christian so conduct himself as to answer t God and His Word.

The present synodical declarations and exhor tations are not only an imposition on Christia conscience. They are also an improper exercise o partiality for a particular group within the church and as such are calculated to aid and abet the part spirit. The tragedy in this instance is that th church herself has become party against a part o the membership of the Christian Reformed Church The church may not, in a situation in which sh must allow that both parties are free before th Lord, choose for one party against another. I she does, she officially lays the basis for schism within the church.

In matters that concern the individual con science, it is not right for a majority vote to impos a judgment or will on the consciences of men. would protest any attempt to have Synod declar that one must exercise his Christian witness as laborer in CIO or AFL. I am persuaded tha others, and above all the church herself (professin to be the mother of us all), should be altogethe unwilling to declare that Christian workers shoul exercise their Christian witness through a Chris tian labor association.

* * *

I have no wish to deprive any members of th Christian Reformed Church of their right an liberty to set up and promote a Christian labo association. But I am persuaded that nothing b disapproval ought to be registered against an attempt to promote the Christian Labor Associa tion by coercive ecclesiastical action, or by pr ferred ecclesiastical legislation and declaration. should like to add that if attempts had not been mad to establish a labor policy for Calvin College build ings that would disqualify laborers affiliated wit CIO and AFL, and if attempts had not been mad to declare membership in those unions unChristia I would not have written about the labor proble

s I did. It is only because some have tried to mpose on our church the judgment that the CLA s the only good and right way, that I have writ-en to say that in my judgment it is not necessarily ither.

Nor do I have objections to the organization of Christian labor association, provided that "Chris-an" be understood in the broad sense as represent-ng universal principles of justice which, because of ne Christian influence and tradition, may be said o be dominant in Western society. I consider, ndeed, that a third major labor union, which ppeals to all American workingmen, and which ndeavors to promote the cause of economic justice nd health, is pre-eminenty desirable in view of the orruption and perversion of power into which CIO nd AFL have fallen. That kind of an organization ould make a wide appeal to many who are per-uaded that the existing unions have greatly degen-rated, and though such an organization might recipitate fierce and bloody conflict within the anks of labor itself, it would improve the labor tuation in America and help to purge the exist-ing unions of many of their evils.

But such a labor association must not be founded on a Christian-confessional basis to which only a few can subscribe, and it must not be a sectarian organization whose strength and prosperity depends on promotion by and recruitment from a particular church body, or it will defeat the larger purpose and become only a shelter. The victory of the CLA in the Minnesota labor dispute was a thrilling thing to read, and it suggests what might be done widely by a formidable labor union movement organized to take issue with existing unions in the whole area of our economic and industrial life. But, on the principle that we may learn things from the children of this generation, I think it well that we should take note of the comment of the *Minneapolis Tribune*: "A seasoned labor observer, once with the AFL-CIO, who has observed CLA at close quarters, refers to CLA leaders as 'men of great integrity but a bit inbred' and adds: 'I doubt if they can be effective outside of their own kind.'" (Quoted in *The Banner*, Nov. 30, 1956, p. 1477).

The Form for Holy Communion

by Lewis B. Smedes

FOR SOME TIME NOW the Christian Reformed hurch has been hesitantly, perhaps somewhat arily, approaching the form for the celebration f the Lord's Supper with an eye to improving . Any opportunity for significant change, how-ver, is limited by the instructions of the Synod f 1954. These instructions are: "No extensive evision or abbreviation of our beautiful and well-ounded form . . . shall be made." A committee ssigned in 1955 to study and work on the form eported last year that more basic improvements ere needed than were possible to make under he limitations set by the 1954 Synod. The Synod id not agree and so discharged this committee. t appointed another committee to the task under the ame restrictions set by the Synod of 1954. This ommittee, now at work, can substitute a few ords for some of the existing archaic terms, isentangle some cumbersome sentences by gram-natical adjustment, and suggest whatever other inor alterations may be possible and perhaps dvisable under the prevailing restrictions. Re-ision of any scope or consequence is ruled out by he instructions of the 1954 Synod.

There is an understandable fear lest anything e lost from what is fondly called our "beautiful and well-rounded form." I am sure, however, that no one desires anything less beautiful or well-rounded. The question is whether ours has the beauty or "well-roundedness" that properly belongs to a liturgical form. The beauty of a thing is always defined by its place and function. A statement may be beautiful as a piece of expository literature, but not properly beautiful as a liturgical form. One may argue that, taken as an explanation of the sacrament, the present form does have beauty, but that, taken as a liturgical form, it does not have the beauty proper to that function.

I shall be making the point that, in a real sense, we do not have a form for the communion service. What we do have is a *formulary* for instruction in the proper understanding and celebration of the sacrament. It is a formulary which is read after the greater part of the worship service is completed. It is actually an appendage to a regular service of worship. For this reason our communion celebration is also an appendage to a regular worship service. More properly, the communion service should embrace the entire worship service. A form for the communion service should, then, encompass the entire service from beginning to end. In this light, what is really needed is not just a revision of the

present formulary, but the construction of a form for the complete communion service. I shall later suggest more of what I mean by this.

EVEN as a formulary, however, the present one is too long and too complicated for effective liturgical use. It is so elaborate and complex that it tends to do two bad things at the communion celebration. One of these bad things is that it draws such concentrated attention to itself that actual celebration of communion seems an anti-climax. The essence and climax of the service is the *doing,* not the teaching *about* the doing. It was to *Do This* that Christ commanded. Naturally, instruction about the sacrament is of paramount importance. But the question in point is how exhaustive and elaborate an exposition is proper within a liturgy. It should never be so elaborate as to render the *doing* itself to be or appear to be anything but the central and climactic event.* The other bad effect of our long formulary is that it tempts people to partake of communion without participating in the liturgy. Read from the pulpit, often not read well because it is terribly difficult to be read well, the lengthy exposition is too much to hold the attention of all participants. To expect people of ordinary abilities to attend carefully to a long prayer, an extended sermon, and then to a long and complicated formulary is quite unrealistic. At least it is unrealistic for our age.

It is hardest on the children. Our children are present at the communion service in most of our churches. The practice trains them in the habit of regular attendance. But it does something else, not so salutary. It trains them effectively in the habit of mental absenteeism. I do not see how it can do otherwise. Very few children have an attention span that can take in our long pastoral prayer, our doctrinal sermon, plus a formulary so complex that even an adult has trouble following it through. Since the children cannot attend to it, they learn not to try. They anticipate not listening when the preacher begins his reading of it. Now, in our preacher-dominated liturgy, the only way to participate is by listening. Inattention means non-participation. Thus, the child is trained in non-participation. One day he becomes responsible and, by God's grace, confesses his Lord. He is invited to participation in the sacrament. But his habit of inattention to the formulary is not broken the first Sunday he partakes of the elements. Quite likely, indeed, the formulary will long remain a part of the communion service in which he does not fully participate.

IN SOME of our sister churches of the Netherlands, the sermon is omitted at the communion service. This is not done because a sermon is considered unnecessary with communion. It is because the formulary takes on the role of a sermon. It offers an exposition of certain portions of the Bible. Hence it conforms with the principle that the sacraments always be celebrated in conjunction with the Word. The thought is valid enough. But it does say something about the liturgical effectiveness of the formulary. A sermon and a liturgical formulary are two different things. If a liturgical formulary satisfies as a sermon, it cannot satisfy as a liturgical formulary.

Abraham Kuyper made a rather unfortunate suggestion that also reflects on the effectiveness of the formulary. He contended that the formulary provides an invitation to the people to come at Christ's behest to His communion. But, said Kuyper, our present formulary is so cumbersome in structure that the point is often lost to the listener. Therefore, he advised, as long as we are bound to the present formulary, each minister should add to the formulary a word of invitation in his own manner. In effect this means: since we are bound to the formulary, let us read it; but since it is partially ineffective, let each minister improve on it as he sees fit. Kuyper's suggestion is at the same time an invitation to both empty formalism and liturgical individualism. But at least it shows that Kuyper was aware of the liturgical deficiency of our present formulary.

One of our troubles, I believe, is that we have thought too narrowly in terms of a formulary rather than in terms of a form for the entire communion service. It is often pointed out, in another connection, that our formulary is a unity. But is it not true that our entire communion service should be a unity? The whole service should be a unity with the celebration as the unifying center and climactic event. And since the communion service embraces the entire service, from Votum to Benediction, the form for the communion service should embrace the whole service.

From the beginning of the service, the minds and hearts of the people should be led towards the reception of the body and blood of the Saviour in the sacred elements. The people should be made conscious at every step that they are being led into the mystery of sacramental communion. The liturgy should lead us, not only to proper understanding, but to a proper devotional receptiveness for the climax of participation in Christ through the sacrament. As it is now, most of the service on communion

* It is interesting to me that while our synods have been scrupulous about every word of the formulary, scarcely anything is said anymore about the current use of individual cups in the serving of the wine, in the actual doing of what Christ commanded. The loss of the common cup, in my mind, is a loss of one of the most meaningful parts of the communion symbolism: the common sharing in the benefits of our Saviour.

unday is quite the same as any other. Then, after e regular worship service is by and large com- eted, we begin the communion service as such with e reading of the formulary. In other words, the mmunion service is a service added to the regular rvice. It is for this reason, we may guess, that is often hurriedly and often coldly performed. hat is really needed, then, is not only a revision the formulary, but the construction of a form r the entire communion service.

A COMMUNION SERVICE would probably contain these basic elements:

(1) *Dedication and Reception.* This is the same ing as what we call the Votum and Salutation. In is the people would dedicate themselves in humble tition with appropriate words and prayers. The ords of reception of the people by their Lord ould then be read by the minister. On communion unday both of these would be done with explicit ference to communion. The form would provide ich biblical sentences as would be fitting.

(2) *Confession and Absolution.* This is, again, t a basic departure from what is regularly done. he Will of God would be read. There would be a mmon prayer of confession. Then would follow e absolution, or assurance of pardon. The differ- nce would be that on this occasion the form would ecifically relate the confession and assurance of ardon to the reception by Christ of penitent sin- ers at His table.

(3) *The Word of God.* This, naturally, would not e strictly part of the form. But it should be in eeping with the form. The Scripture lesson should e one that accents the condescending movement of race towards sinful men. The sermon should mphasize the activity of the Spirit and the recep- vity of the people in communion. The sermon will e less enthusiastically exhortative than intensely evotional. The leaning will be towards the prepa- ation of receptive believers.

(4) *The Congregational Prayer.* The prayer hould be prepared with special petition for the ulfillment of God's promise in the sacrament. It hould not be overly long. It should contain petition or the Body of Christ, but be light on the customary st of petitions for more remote kingdom enter- rises. It would be fitting if suggestive prayers ere published as part of the form. The minister ould then use these as guides in the preparation of is communion service congregational prayer.

(5) *The Celebration.* Everything must lead to his point. The climax of the service has been eached. Care must now be used that the climax s not held off too long by a lengthy and difficult ormulary. All the elements of the formulary to e read at this point must be brief. This is not the moment for an exhaustive exposition. There should be a pointed statement of the spiritual requirements for worthy communication. There should be a confession of faith: the creed. There should be brief prayers of adoration and dedication. And there shou'd be an invitation to communion in words of our Lord. With this, the words of institution will be read.

Here especially we shall need a broader permit than that given by the Synod in 1954. The prohibition of extensive revision will better be modified. There is a rich treasury of communion liturgy in the Christian Church which should not be despised by us. The Anglo-Saxon Church world has been most fruitful in liturgical work. The elements of *The Book of Common Prayer* are doctrinally inoffensive to a Reformed mind and its liturgy is superb. Even the Dutch, who have given us our liturgy, are most willing to acknowledge the liturgical superiority of the English church. (In his *Onze Eeredienst* Kuyper praises the Anglican communion service as most ideal.) In profiting from the liturgies of other lands than the Netherlands we would not be repudiating our heritage. We would, I think, be enriching it.

(6) *Thanksgiving and Praise.* Here would be read a selection of praise. The people would present their offering of thanksgiving. And very quickly, the service would be concluded with the Doxology and Benediction.

I have mentioned, of course, only the basic ingredients of a communion service. The hymns used should be such as to express the need and the privilege of receiving the grace of Christ in communion. The old revival hymn, *Just As I Am,* is an admirable hymn sung just prior to actual reception. It expresses very aptly the right attitude of the believing communicant. Immediately after participation the hymn, *O Jesus Joy of Loving Hearts,* is very fitting, especially the stanza that runs:

> We taste Thee, O Thou living bread,
> And long to feast upon Thee still;
> We drink of Thee, the fountain-head,
> And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

The service generally may call for more active participation by the people than is regularly the case. The creed as well as some prayers — or responses to prayers — should be joined orally by the people. The people should not shout Amen when they feel like it, but should be allowed to say Amen together when it is fitting.

Nothing has been said about self-examination. This should be given a separate formulary to be used on the Sunday prior to communion. The summons to self-examination should be given when there is yet ample time for it. As everyone knows, many congregations now use the portion of our present form dealing with self-examination on the Sunday before communion. This comes, one may

Holy Communion — Continued

suppose, partly from a desire for a briefer formulary to read on communion Sunday. But it is a device agreeable to the requirements of the situation. As to its contents, *The Book of Common Prayer* contains a most excellent example of a formulary for self-examination. The earlier part of our present form could also be used as a source. At any rate, it should be a separate formulary, distinct from the form for the communion service as such.

A COMMUNION SERVICE such as I have suggested would run into difficulties at the so-called "second" communion service. The evening service as a whole could hardly be geared to the communion when only a few participate and the great majority only look on. The solution is to discontinue the "second" service of communion on communion Sunday. As it now is, the communion at the "second" service is an intermezzo in the evening worship. As the "first" service is an *addenda* to the morning worship, in which all participate, the "second" is a parenthesis within the evening worship, in which a few participate. It is not surprising that some ministers resort to an abbreviated formulary of their own making for the "second" service. The whole thing is unwieldy and improper, with or without an abbreviated formulary. When communion is celebrated, the whole congregation should participate in the entire service. For this, the only solution is to discontinue the so-called "second" service.

This need not deprive anyone from regular celebration of communion. The "second" service is largely for those whose families render it impossible for husband and wife to be present at the same service. At present most congregations have four communion Sundays per year. In these four Sundays, however, they have eight celebrations of communion; that is, they have two celebrations on each of four communion Sundays, making eight celebrations. Why could we not simply increase the number of communion Sundays to eight? We would not be increasing the number of communion celebrations. Most of our churches have eight of them now. With eight communion Sundays, however, those who can attend but one service each Sunday would still be given opportunity for four celebrations per year. Those who can attend both services each Sunday would be given opportunity for eight celebrations. And whenever communion were celebrated, the entire congregation would participate. The grace of Christ is not bound to four celebrations per year; nor does the Church Order suggest that it is so bound. It only sets four as the *minimum* number of celebrations; it sets no maximum. The familiar argument that communion becomes "commonplace" when celebrated too frequently could not possibly hold here, for there would be no more celebrations than at present. The advantage, besides providing for congregational celebration at each communion service, is that the form for the communion service would always embrace the entire service.

The one thing that is lacking is Synod's inclination to allow for more extensive improvement on our present formulary. From all angles it would appear that our next Synod would be well advised to remove the restrictions under which any committee to improve our formulary must now labor. This means relaxing the instructions of the Synod of 1954. We need not fear that the "beautiful and well-rounded form" will be rendered less beautiful or symmetrical. At any time, Synod can reject what its committee produces. But we should at least give our committees room to work in. Perhaps, given time and patience enough, we can construct a form for our communion service that will be even more beautiful and symmetrical than our present formulary. We ought at least to have the humility and the courage to see the possibility.

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Thoughts for the Times
On Philosophy and Theology

by Jesse DeBoer

ATTENTION TO THE WRITINGS of several of the st contemporary philosophers will show that dur- g the past half century an important change has en going on in conceptions of the relation of hilosophy to theology. This century is a period of onderful and terrible events, and the change I fer to is one of the items which contributes to its scination. Speaking quite personally, this change one of the reasons why I am glad to be alive day. I trust that one will be surprised by my ing joyful: any Christian can be expected to face ange with confidence. It is sub-Christian to be wed and frightened by the flux of history. Faith God repels despair of His creation. If I were Platonist, however, you could expect me to despair history.

In order to present a rough picture of the change luded to, I shall use a parable made up by Mr. asil Mitchell, Fellow of Keble College in Oxford. goes like this. Until roughly fifty years ago the eologian and the philosopher pretty well under- od each other; each knew what the other was ing. Both occupied pulpits and both preached. e philosopher, like the theologian, worked out eat views and systems of ultimate reality and ered a good deal of advice on how men should nduct their affairs. Sometimes they agreed; re often they disagreed. But then one day the ilosopher left his pulpit, announcing that it was t his business to describe the ultimate or to e advice for living. He had a special job, which s logical analysis, not metaphysics. He was ing to devote himself to logic and to analysis language. The theologian was surprised at s development. Not knowing how to take the ilosopher's decision, he became suspicious. The ilosopher gave most of his time, of course, to specialized new assignment, but occasionally he uld exclaim in public that what the theologian d to say was nonsense. Later on the philosopher would concede that the theologian's talk was nonsense in a very strict sense of the word, that in fact it was profound nonsense. This did not allay the theologian's uneasiness. He was bewildered; he asked himself whether the old regime of rivalry between philosophy and theology was not more pleasant and comfortable than the present new regime, under which it often looked as if he were not even being taken seriously. The philosopher often did not even take the trouble to contradict the theologian. To finish the story, "the theologian's bewilderment perhaps reached its height when, as occasionally happened, the philosopher would come and sit beneath his pulpit and murmur agreement with his propositions (or at least quasi-agreement with his quasi-propositions)." (Basil Mitchell in *The Socratic*, No. Five: Contemporary Philosophy and Christian Faith, p. 4.)

This parable roughly fits actual developments since 1900. Before looking more closely at these developments, let us remind ourselves of an important feature of modern philosophy prior to 1900. The dominant tendency in modern philosophy has been empirical, and David Hume merits being taken as a spokesman for modern empiricism on the relation of philosophy to theology, particularly natural or rational theology, and still more particularly the traditional arguments for God's existence. Hume argued that these arguments all failed, giving such reasons as the following. The ontological argument, because it does without an empirical premise of any kind and starts from a definition only, could not possibly establish a truth of fact or existence. Another kind of argument, such as a causal or cosmological argument, does begin with an empirical premise — for example, that the world exists, or that there is motion, or purposive motion, in the world. Still, says Hume, such arguments also fail, for they cannot *demonstrate* their conclusion; that is, conclusion does not follow necessarily. All empirical statements are contingent and probable only, and only a probable conclusion can be drawn from an empirical premise. So rational theology fails entirely. This is Hume's conclusion. At this point I am not trying to do justice to Hume, and for the moment I do not wish to say more about the traditional

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wish to record herewith my appreciation of the honor given me by the Guild of Calvinist Scholars when it in- ited me to read a paper on the language of Christian hought before its annual meeting of 1956. This I did n August 21. Since then I have divided that paper nto two parts which will be printed separately in this *ournal*. I have not tried to remove expressions that were uited to a spoken version, partly because I am reluctant o make my reflections look more final than I realize they re, or to conceal my responsibility behind the anonymity f the editorial "we" or an excessive use of the passive oice. —J. DEBOER

arguments for God's existence. In a later paper I shall return to these arguments.

Now, since 1900 the challenge to theology has become a good deal more radical than Hume's challenge. Hume did not say one very important thing (though after this did get said one might find hints of it in Hume), namely, that religious assertions are logically unfit for being understood or believed. What Hume in fact said was that the Christian faith, precisely because it is faith, cannot be proved; and not a few Christians would be glad to agree with him. It was the Logical Positivists who took the step of saying that the assertions of faith are logically incapable of being statements. They said, not merely that we cannot fully support theological statements, but that these are not statements and that therefore they cannot be believed or disbelieved. They are not capable of being true or false, they assert nothing whatever. So the condition for their being affirmed or denied does not obtain. They are pseudo-propositions. We should note that this position is more thorough than the atheist's. The atheist must understand what is meant by "God exists" before he can deny its truth. The positivist says, "I cannot make out what you are asking me to believe."

I desire that we look on positivism with respect. So I pause a moment to point to important developments leading up to it. In Britain, toward the close of the nineteenth century, philosophers came to the conclusion that the time had come for a change in the manner of doing philosophy, that there was no use going on with philosophy as if it were "mental science" or psychology. Psychology had come of age as an independent factual or natural science, just as physics had done centuries before. At the same time there rose to view at the base of mathematics or mathematical logic, problems which mathematicians could not solve; the mathematicians called on philosophers to cope with these problems.

In Vienna certain philosophers became convinced likewise that philosophy needed a change; but here the conclusion was that there was no use going on with the prevalent attitude in the German-speaking world that of course the philosopher was the super-authority who passed final judgment on the scientists, on Darwin, Freud, and Einstein. As Professor Gilbert Ryle puts it: "The Vienna Circle repudiated the myth that the questions of physics, biology, psychology or mathematics can be decided by metaphysical considerations. Metaphysics is not a governess-science or a sister-science; it is not a science at all." ("Ludwig Wittgenstein," *Analysis,* Vol. 12, No. 1 [Oct. 1951], p. 3.)

These two developments, one in Britain and the other in Austria, posed in different ways and with new urgency the question about the nature of philosophy. In Vienna, revolting against the view that philosophy judges the sciences, philosophers asked about the powers of the sciences which philosophy lacks. In England, where the independence of psychology was conceded but paradoxes had appeared in mathematics and logic, philosophers asked about the powers of philosophy which enable it to remove puzzles in the sciences. So the Viennese pursued the positive powers of the sciences defending them against the pretensions of philosophers; while the British, unworried about the status of the sciences but worried about problems within the sciences, pursued the positive function of logic and philosophy.

The preceding paragraphs owe a good deal to Professor Gilbert Ryle's talk on Ludwig Wittgenstein delivered over the B.B.C. Third Programme on May 26, 1951. Near the end of this talk occur two sentences which it may be useful to repeat. "Wittgenstein," says Ryle, "has made our generation of philosophers self-conscious about philosophy itself." Again, "Maybe we have been made a bit neurotic about the nature of our calling. I submit that if neurosis is unhealthy, there nevertheless does exist a need to sort out the many different sorts of work which philosophers had been doing throughout the history of Western culture and try to decide which of them might be taken as expressly philosophical. No doubt, what was called for was a decision, not just description or definition. The word "philosophy" has never had in our tradition a definite sense, it never named a special function; perhaps it was time to pick out one or two functions and reserve for these the name of philosophy.

Now, the positivists have done good service in urging that we rethink this matter of what the philosopher can do. One has to note, however, that Logical Positivism, fascinated by the techniques of mathematics and physical science, adopted an unduly restrictive model for significant sentences and soon aroused sharp criticism. When it abandoned the notion that philosophy supplies information about facts and is a science, and when it suggested that the philosopher's special task is to examine sentences or statements with a view to discovering whether or not they say something and what varieties of meaning or use they exhibit, positivism performed a genuine service. But the early positivist pronouncements about empirical or factual meaning had to be modified. The first formulation was: "The meaning of a proposition is the method of its verification," which has been called the "verification principle." Later Professor A. J. Ayer offered a broader formula, as follows: "A proposi-

on has meaning if, and only if, some possible nse experience is relevant to the determination its truth or falsehood." Any sentence failing pass this test was said to lack "literal" or actual" meaning and was listed as nonsensical. yer himself said that typical sentences in theology d ethics are pseudo-propositions; they make no atements at all.

It was soon pointed out, chiefly by students of hical assertions and reasoning, that Ayer had dulged in an extravagance. Commands and oral judgments are of course not verified in the anner of factual or scientific statements; but ey are perfectly intelligible, the distinction tween observing and violating rules is perfectly miliar, and it is possible to carry on a great al of elaborate reasoning to explain and justify ral principles, as much as is needed or may expected. Futhermore, what is the logical tus of the verification principle? Does it need be verifiable in order to be significant, or is it declaration of policy?

It became apparent that the positivists had osen the sort of sentences which are typical of ysical science and of workaday description of nat- al facts ("The cat is on the mat") to supply a mod- for meaningful statements or propositions. Any erance that does not fit the model was listed ong pesudo-propositions. This is the background the emotive theory of ethical utterances and somewhat similar views of typical religious pressions. The comfortable but costly narrow- ss of positivism needed to be replaced by a more en and wide-ranging schema of types of sentence d discourse.

It is characteristic of contemporary philosophers at they refuse to pose as super-experts in phys- , morals or theology; and that they insist on arching for the logical peculiarities of the many d various kinds of discourse which people learn use, and on disentangling the problems which ise when kinds of discourse cross each other d produce a quandary. They are eager to explore e differences between sentences and reasoning all major fields of discourse: while they do not im to be experts in morals, they do try to under- nd the logic of ethical assertions and ethical asoning, and how this differs from intelligent rformances in physics or theology.

It is more important to look closely at this contemporary notion of the nature of philosophy d of its relation to the several fields of know- lge, including theology. The philosopher does t claim to discover facts, to be a scientist. He not in competition with mathematicians, biolo- sts or moralists. Similarly, he does not engage surgery, and he possesses no better-than-ordinary means for ascertaining whether he has his shoes on. (Many notorious philosophical problems arise from a misguided craving for a better-than-ordinary means for making sure that one has shoes on or that he sees a cow.) If theology has a subject matter and if there can be intelligent talk about it, the philosopher is on a level with ordinary citizens with respect to the truth claims of theological assertions; his special competence does not give him an extraordinary flair for ascertaining the truth of such statements.

His special task is that of second-level discussion, the business of talking about the talk done by people working in the several fields of first-level discussion, whether this is about shoes or keeping promises or God. In the abstract, there can be no contradiction between philosophy and theology or morals; philosophy is neutral analysis of the differences between the logical operations of people engaging in their several species of talk. In the concrete, of course, a philosopher is a man among men, and often an imperfect specimen, conditioned by his better or worse education and subject to bias and intellectual myopia. As a man he has to face the same important substantive issues faced by every man, and may do so no more wisely than John Doe. To conclude with these remarks, let me quote a couple of sentences from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. "The object of philosophy is the logical clarification of thoughts. Philosophy is not a theory but an activity. A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations. The result of philosophy is not a number of 'philosophical propositions,' but to make propositions clear" (4.112).

If there is substance in what I have been saying, it should turn out that many of the great writers known as philosophers were much more than philosophers. We should be drawing the lines in the wrong places entirely if we called Plato a philosopher while calling Augustine a theologian, and similarly if we said that Plato and Aristotle based their work on reason while Christian writers relied on reveltaion. Of course Plato was a competent philosopher; he was also an intelligent man working in a dozen special disciplines in which his philosophical competence does not contribute to the correctness of his special views. Among other things, he was a theologian, and an intelligent one; I incline to claim that his theological assertions, though certainly different from Christian ones, are equally intelligent with them.

I want now to draw up a rough sketch of basic points in Platonic theology. I do this both in order to show that Plato is a theologian competing with Christian (or Brahmanic) theologians, and in order to remind ourselves of the historical fact that Plato's kind of theology has been and is attractive to intelligent people.

Philosophy and Theology —Continued

The doctrine of God is basic. Plato's God is a Demiurge, that is, an artisan or craftsman. He is not a creator but a shaper; there exists independently of him and co-eternal with him a material principle which Plato calls the Receptacle or Space. This principle, says Plato, is apprehended by a sort of "bastard reasoning" and cannot be defined, for it is formless, a purely receptive something. It permits God to impress Forms on itself on the analogy of a potter shaping clay, and this leads to the emergence in flux of copies of the timeless Forms. The copies are defective because of the independence of the material. Notice how Plato's genuine piety, his religiousness shows itself. Defects in nature or history are explained by the recalcitrance of the medium, the stuff out of which God made the world, not by defects in God's competence or integrity. God is an honest and skillful workman; not he but the material causes defect. To a few of the important consequences hanging from these basic notions I want to call attention.

First, Plato cannot justify empirical natural science. About the possibility of such knowledge Plato is in despair. Natural objects owe their particular details, which are sensed, to matter, and matter contributes only defect and deviation. Modern natural science, with its confidence in observation and in the regularity of nature according to formulae which can be expressed in mathematical terms, was made possible after generations of training in Christian doctrine.

Second, toward historical sequence Plato is equally in despair. The co-ultimacy of the materal, with its threat of chaos, leads Plato to idealize the regular repetitive motions found in nature (the cycles of day and night, and of the seasons) as models for human life and history. Time, he says, is the moving image of eternity; this means that motionlessness is best, and that nature, in lieu of achieving what is best, gets as close as possible to eternity by circular repetitive movement. In history civilizations rise and fall in a repetitive beat. I take this doctrine to be a very refined form of idolatry; Plato uses the routine of sub-human nature to guide his sketch of God's plan and of history. Otherwise put, he worships the stars and makes them the model for our life. Unable to cope with matter, God achieves all he can by persuading matter to accept circularity.

Third, Plato has a similar picture of each person's career. If the ideal could be realized the soul would remain apart of the body altogether. "Once upon a time, long ago" it did exist apart from nature, dwelling with the gods among the Forms. By some mischance, some fatality which was owing, no doubt, to the efficacy of the material principle and hence outside God's control, the soul got heavy and fell into the organism and flux. The body now obscure its vision and may well blind it to its spiritual goa So the aim of life is to despise the flesh and so pre pare oneself for a return to separate existence But victory is never final, or almost never; on cannot escape the power of matter. After a per fect age in Paradise the immortal soul is unde necessity to re-enter the body. Let me state th point as applying to myself. I am fated to endles cyclic repetition of birth and death in this con taminating world. There is no sin, I am a victi of fatality — the misery happens to me. An salvation is illusory: once gained, it has to be sur rendered. In the sixth book of the *Aeneid* Aenea cries out in anguish when this scheme is explaine to him on the banks of Lethe, the river of oblivio through which the purified souls pass before bein reborn. His outcry is like that of the Hindu: "I this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a wate less well."

It is important to be clear on the fact that wha I have just surveyed is religious teaching, it theology. Why diffuse a fog by calling this phi osophy? It is a further fact that Plato uses mos of his pages to offer opinions on such special topi as politics and law, how to regulate sex and ma riage, how to bring up children and political exper (or social engineers), what poets do and how control them. I would argue that the worst mi takes in Plato's special opinions consist in the being shaped by his theological scheme; for exampl he pictures the statesman on the model of his craft man God, and this is why ancient political thoug and practice (remember the deified Roman empero are basically offensive and dangerous. Similarly h body-soul dualism is one source of the evil featur in the Western moral tradition respecting sex. T spiritual contest of Christianitty with Platonic th ology, which at an early time involved the rival between the Church Fathers and the Gnostics a Neo-Platonists, has not yet been decided, and the is need today to work this ground afresh and return to the elements of Hebraism and the Gosp

In order to conclude my discussion of Plato, me put forward a few more technical or logi notes. As a species of theology Platonism refe the natural or empirical world to a ground or cau beyond itself, something transcendent. How th is done, and why it has to be done: these questio challenge Plato as much as they challenge Christia On this issue Plato is in no better position than Augustine or Isaiah, despite the fact that Pla gives more theory than does the prophet.

Further, Plato needs a bridge for the applicati of language to the transcendent. He has to r on analogies because he needs to apply words the transcendent which he first learned to use application to items in the empirical sense. He

o, Plato faces a problem common to adherents any kind of theology.

Finally, there is room for logical analysis of the nds of analogy that Plato uses to talk about the anscendent. Let me distinguish briefly his vo chief kinds. First there is his use of the word ause" in speaking of the shaping function of the emiurge; the model for the standard use of this ord is the craftsman. I am inclined to say that lato's theology is hampered by his taking cobblers nd sculptors as supplying the standard sense of e word "artist" (and of "cause" too), and that hristians, in order to work out how they differ om Platonists, ought to develop an account of art hich borrows from the doctrine of creation. econd, there is Plato's statement of both a connec- on and a difference between Forms and instances, with the Forms being presented as the perfect Example, and instances as incomplete examples, of a given character. There is something radically vicious in a logical sense, about Plato's procedure here: it makes no sense to say that the Form Circularity is circular or that the Form Honesty is honest. But let this pass. While Plato does say that circular things participate in Circularity, thus asserting a connection, he also insists that circular things fall short of being circular and are called circular by courtesy (as it were) of approximation to something which is fully circular. And this line of thought really abandons analogy, for the word "circular" is univocal and the things said to be circular, namely, both empirical items and the Form, are said to be so in virtue of reference to one and the same character.

Church Control of Calvin College

by John H. Bratt

I SHOULD LIKE TO SAY at the outset that in my timation there is no specific Scriptural data that s direct bearing on the question with which this ticle is concerned. The problem does not lend itlf to immediate solution by appeal to a "Thus ith the Lord." Hence it is that general Scriptural nsiderations along with appeal to the lessons of story and experience will govern my line of argu- entation. On that basis I contend that the Chris- an Reformed Church ought to retain ecclesiasti- l control of Calvin College. I do so on four counts:

I. It violates no principle of Scripture.

II. It affords a fair range of academic freedom.

III. It serves to unify the denomination.

IV. It has proven to be eminently satisfactory.

ECCLESIASTICAL control of Calvin College violates no Scriptural principle. On the con- ary, I would maintain that it is in full accord with e principles of the Word of God.

Of particular pertinence at this juncture is the inciple that Abraham Kuyper enunciated in his augural address at the founding of the *Vrije Uni- ersiteit* in 1880, the "sovereignty of the spheres" (*Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring*). It is the principle, ased on Scripture we believe, that each sphere church, labor, politics, education, etc.)[1] has its wn particular genius, its own authority, and its own task to perform under God. Two things need to be borne in mind with respect to the concept of "sovereignty of the spheres." One is that Kuyper himself, the father of the principle in that his emphasis upon it served to intrench it within the thinking of the Christian Reformed denomination, took no absolutistic position on it. On the contrary, he allowed for extenuations of it. In his reference to the state universities he stated that they, ideally, should be free educational institutions but he added that it would be unwise to detach them from the government at that point because, first, a sufficient number of educational philanthropists was not available to carry the financial burden and second, there was not sufficient interest in education in the people at large. And so long as that situation obtained, said he, it would neither be feasible nor wise to divorce them. In other words, circumstances allowed for extenuations.[2]

My second observation with respect to the "sovereignty of the spheres" principle is that although the spheres can and should be differentiated, they cannot and should not be isolated the one from the other. Nor was that the intent of the enunciators and proponents of the principle. The main objective was precautionary and protective. As Dr. Henry Meeter puts it: "The intent is that no outside influence may interfere with the proper persuance of its task."[3] Any intrusion by an alien force that would prevent the proper performance

1. John Calvin spoke of three spheres: Church, State, and ciety. *Institutes*, Book IV.

2. *Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring*, p. 22.
3. *Calvinism*, p. 159.

Control of Calvin College — Continued

of its God-ordained task and any infringement of its authority is to be strenuously resisted. But interdependence and overlapping of the spheres is inevitable. That is true in the one case more so than in the other. The Church and Education are much more closely related, for example, than the Church and Economics or the Church and Politics. For proof I have but to point to the fact that the Christian Reformed Church has church education programs but it has no church economic guilds or church trade unions or church political factions. There are at least two reasons for that intimate relationship between the spheres of Church and Education. For one thing, they have a common concern and ingredient and that is Truth. The Church is the custodian of Truth, all Truth, Truth about God and the spiritual but also Truth about reality imbedded in God's world because Truth is one, and Education's main function is to investigate Truth, transmit it, and in so doing form the character of men. And secondly, there is that intimate relationship between special and general revelation, the first of which is the special domain of the Church and the second the special domain of the School. They can hardly be kept disparate. As Herman Bavinck expressed it, the two do not "stand in isolation alongside one another but rather in constant interrelationship." "And let us not forget," said he, "that general revelation although derived from nature is nevertheless taken up in the Scriptures."[4]

What about the particular province of the Church? Its special province, of course, is the Word of God. And with respect to that Word it has a two-pronged duty laid upon it by the Lord. One is the dissemination of the gospel. In His *great commission* the Lord said, "Go out into all the world and bring the gospel to every creature . . . ." The other duty is the educative assignment — it is to propagate Calvinism, which is nothing more than saying that the sovereign claims of Christ need to be laid on all areas of life. "We are," as Christ asserted in that same great commission, "to teach them to observe all that I have commanded them" and in the words of Paul, the great interpreter of the Lord, to "bring every thought in captivity to Christ." We aim, in obedience to Christ's commission, to proclaim the pure gospel of the free grace of God. We seek to insure the purity of the gospel message by maintaining a seminary and staffing it with well-trained men who have the full confidence of the church. But we know that if students entered the seminary with heterodox ideas garnered in alien institutions, those ideas might be difficult to dislodge, and consequently (as the Christian R formed Synod of 1912 declared), some ecclesiastic control of pre-seminary training would seem to be desideratum if the church is to produce and ser out soundly-trained ambassadors of the gospel Christ.

We seek at Calvin to realize for the church t second objective, that of inculcating and propaga ing the Reformed view of life and reality, by gi ing training in the general revelation fields on t basis of the interpretation of the Word of God. W aim to view God's world in the light of God's Wor Then we are not training embryonic doctors nurses or lawyers or laboratory technicians teachers in the first instance but we are "teachi them to observe all that Christ has commanded seeking to harness all of their thoughts "in ca tivity to Christ" and then sending them forth honor the claims of Christ the King in every ar of life.

But the question protrudes itself at once, Cann we realize these aims fully as well if not better in society-controlled school? Cannot we exercise su care in the quality of our membership and in o choice of the board of trustees that the same en will be achieved? Wouldn't it be well to entru the college to a society?

At this point, so it seems to me, we need to dra a lesson from the pages of our country's histor And the history of church-related colleges in Am ica is a tragic one. By and large all of them (so 500 in number) have been engulfed in the tid wave of religious liberalism. What caused t tragedy? What led to this debacle? I share t conviction of the late Professor D. H. Krommin and others[5] who maintain that in a gradual sev ance of the close tie between Church and Sch there lay the seeds of spiritual disaster. And wh occasioned this divorcement? It was financial dependency for the schools. After the Civil W we entered upon the era of Big Business. Alo with Big Business and large personal fortunes we extensive philanthropy. Practically all of the re giously affiliated schools shared in that phila thropic activity. The result was large educatio endowments built up by American wealth. As consequence the gap was steadily widened betwe Church and School. The latter was no longer pendent on the gifts of the former. Independen soon showed itself in appointment to professor chairs. The primary emphasis was not on religi commitment but on scholarly attainment, and wasn't long before naturalists and humanists increasing numbers were holding professor chairs in purportedly Christian institutions. T

4. *Our Reasonable Faith*, pp. 38, 45.

5. For example. F. W. Padelford, "The Church in Hig Education' in Wickey & Anderson, *Christian Higher E cation* (1940). W. C. Bower. "Protestant Higher Edu tion" in *The College of the Bible Quarterly*, Vol. 32, p.

stwhile Christian college lost inevitably its distinctiveness and sent liberally trained men into its pulpits and into the church until it was thoroughly filtrated, and with the decline of the school went the decline of the church. The chain of retrogression was quite clear. Heavy endowments promoted dependence and independence led to spiritual sin. That to my mind is the eloquent lesson of history.

MY SECOND point is that ecclesiastical control affords a fair range of academic freedom.

It hardly needs argument, I trust, that a certain measure of latitude on the part of scholar and teacher in the educational process is highly necessary. That latitude is indispensable if there is to be any progress in learning. If it is absent, stagnation and stultification and traditionalism, in which the new and novel is contraband per sé, is bound to result. Some academic freedom is certainly indispensable.

And that freedom is not ordinarily associated with a church-related or denominational school. The term "church-school" usually connotes narrow confines of learning and scrupulously close surveillance of the classroom. It savors of curtailment and restriction and severe limitations. The picture drawn is that of impatient scholarship, eager to explore the unknown reaches, but held back by the suspicious look or the forbidding frown of the church. The school is depicted as progressive and forward-looking while the church is conservative and hidebound and steeped in its own tradition. For documentation the finger is pointed at the medieval church. It assumed that what was worth knowing was already known. It made life intolerable for the inventor and the innovator and in the words of Abraham Kuyper, who compared the intrepid explorer to a soaring bird: ". . . he who being of more heroic mettle defied opposition, was punished by having his wings clipped; and if he nevertheless tried to fly with clipped wings, he had his neck wrung."[6]

Three comments are in order at this point:

(1) It is very true that if a church is bogged down in superstition and mechanicalism as was the Medieval Church, and if it has lost the incentive to explore and bring to light the treasures imbedded in God's world (and that too was true of the Medieval Church in its "other-worldly" attitude towards life), the school it supports and controls will be fettered by bare traditionalism and will be obstructed in the pursuance of its proper task. But conversely, if a church is healthy and vigorous, taking seriously Article 2 of the Belgic Confession, and, in the words of John Robinson, it is "awaiting new light to break forth from God's truth," it will afford a measure of freedom to the school it controls. In that sense, as the church goes, so goes the school.

(2) We have as much academic freedom as we want and need. We have the freedom and liberty within the boundaries of the Confessions to which we subscribe. We desire no further freedom than that, simply because we are and want to remain a confessional church. Were we to go beyond their confines, these confessions would automatically become museum pieces and take their place among the collection of relics of a bygone age. We want them to remain living documents and within their boundaries, I maintan, we have a fair range of freedom today. I have but to mention the variant views among us on Ussher's Chronology and the age of the earth, spawned in our generation and the divergencies of viewpoint with respect to integration and segregation of racial minority groups. There has been a considerable amount of latitude and no one of us, I am sure, has felt the constrictive hand of the church upon him.

(3) I venture to say that the extent of academic freedom we now enjoy might conceivably be curtailed were we to transfer the school to an association. It requires little imagination to picture likely developments. One of the basic problems will be the acquisition of requisite operating funds. College education is costly. And as one of my colleagues has put it (having in mind the ill-fated history of Grundy College, which had a competent teaching staff and an adequate plant but no financial resources), "No money, no school." Sizable contributions would have to be sought. Industry would have to be constantly tapped. Individuals of means would need to bear the brunt of the burden. And munificent donors would variably be named to the board of trustees and would control the institution. Does that presage a greater amount of freedom than we enjoy? Isn't it likely, as President W. G. Henry of LaGrange College asserted recently, that subscription to a certain political philosophy and the holding of certain economic views would be one of the tests of professorship with the dismal alternative of having the inflow of funds cut off at the source? It would seem to me that the range of freedom we want and desire is best guaranteed by the arrangement that obtains today.

MY THIRD argument is that Calvin College, under ecclesiastical control, serves to unify the denomination which supports it.

The College is one of the cohesive factors in the Christian Reformed Church, and it ought to be permitted to continue to serve that end in the denomination. Tendencies to fractionalism and sectionalism are not foreign to us. The germs of fissiparism are always present with us. There are the different mores that obtain in various parts

6. *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 28.

Control of Calvin College —Continued

of the denomination so that, for example, square dancing is condoned in one area while it is condemned in another. There is the Canadian branch of the Christian Reformed Church which contains within it a contingent of those who are impatient with what they take to be a lack of "principial" thinking in the States. There are the mush-rooming Junior Colleges which seek to fill a real need and from the nature of the case serve one particular sector of the denomination. There is the ideological tension between those who differ in their interpretation of the "antithesis." All of these fractional tendencies are there and their presence was one of the factors that led our synod to give a negative reaction to the proposal for particular synods a few years ago. That trend towards fractionalism must not be accelerated.

By counteraction we have an education institution that calls for the moral and financial interest and concern of the entire constituency. There may be some resentment at and chafing under this compulsory involvement but the fact remains that here is an institution of all our people with not one single member excepted. This is "their school" and they are responsible for it. It is on the prayer-list of all the ministers in the denomination; it draws its students from all sectors of the church; it is the legitimate target of constructive criticism from everyone; and it asks for the contribution of every family in the denomination. It has stood out since its inception as the central training center, the point of focus educationally and the fountainhead of Calvinistic study among us, so that it not only sends its sons into the seminary and into the pulpits of the church but its sons and daughters into allied institutions and into the trades and into the professions, impregnated, hopefully, with the Reformed view of life. And in an age when cohesion is the trend, when men are cementing organic unions and healing breaches in order to make a greater impact upon our contemporary world, we ought to retain what unifying strands we have so that we, too, with our potential contribution, can put up a united front to the world.

THE FOURTH point in support of ecclesiastical control is an appeal to the achievements we have made. The present arrangement has proven its mettle and stood the test of the decades.

With this dual set-up we have, in the grace of God in this first century of our denominational existence, achieved our dual goals: one, to maintain the "faith once for all delivered to the saints"; and two, to provide a liberal arts training that in competence and excellence needs no apology and compares favorably with others. We can be deeply thankful for this. Amid the apostatizing that has mark our country religiously, we have, I believe, mai tained a firm hold on the fundamentals of t faith. Various factors come into play here, I re lize, but one of them I firmly believe is the supe vision and surveillance that the church has exercis with respect to its major liberal arts educatio institution. Deviation is usually hatched in t scholar's study, from whence it is carried into t classroom. Conscientious church control, whi giving the latitude of the Confessions, has serv to prevent such meandering from the faith.

It has not done so at the expense of acade ideals and achievement. It has not been necessa to sacrifice scholarship to piety. Calvin Colle has attained a reputation for solid learning and known for its reputable liberal arts and pre-p fessional courses of training. Its graduates ha never had reason to deplore marked deficienc in their training there and have been more th able to hold their own in competition with gra uates of other schools. The registrar tells me th our University of Michigan scholarship studer have consistently held top rating and that our Wo row Wilson scholars have received wide accla for the high caliber of their graduate work. A realizing those two goals, retention of loyalty the faith and achievement of academic idea wouldn't it be notoriously indiscreet and ill-advis to effect a change?

It seems to me that it would be very hazardo so to do. At one of the meetings of the presider of the church-related colleges in the state of Mi igan, one of the college presidents posed a probl for the assembly. It had to do with the enrollm of Roman Catholic students at the institution th he was serving. They had welcomed their enr ment. And all went well until an assertive you priest came into that parish. He demanded th these Roman Catholic students be excused fr chapel services and be exempted from all religi courses. What should the school do? Tuiti from these Roman Catholic students represen a sizable sum. Futhermore, these Roman Cath families had been generous givers to the insti tion. He posed the dilemma. But he was t "Your problem is simple, make chapel volunta and the religious courses optional." Are we willi do we dare to lay ourselves open to such a dang

IN SUMMARY then, since no Scriptural princi is being violated, since we have a fair ra of academic freedom, since we possess in the sch an exellent unifying force of the denomination, since we are realizing goals of religious fide and academic respectability, I maintain that unl compelling reasons are adduced Calvin Coll should be supported and controlled by the Ch tian Reformed Church.

Pages From the Past

· the Centennial Year — a collection of contemporary accounts and documents which reflect something of the origins and developing life of the Christian Reformed Church. Selected and edited by Dr. George Stob.

Classis Holland's Story

In the last issue of *The Reformed Journal*, under the heading *Gijsbert Haan's Story*, there appeared a translation of Haan's *Stem Eens Belasterden*. In this account Haan, the leading spirit of the Secession of 1857, offered a defense of himself, his behavior toward the Dutch Reformed Church, and his separation from that church. What is now given below may be called *Classis Holland's Story*. It is taken from the *Minutes of Classis Holland*, 1848-1858, published by a joint Committee of the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church. In these minutes there appears a different account of the character of Haan, his attitude toward the Dutch Reformed Church, and his secession from it.

At its meeting held in Zeeland, Michigan, on April 2, 1856, Classis Holland dealt at length with a serious conflict that had developed in the church at Grand Rapids between Gijsbert Haan and elder-elect G. Daalman. Haan had accused Daalman of heterodoxy, and had charged that he was elected to the Grand Rapids consistory in an illegal way. The Classis gave a good deal of time and effort to the adjudication of this matter. It finally, after having examined Daalman, expressed itself as satisfied with Daalman's orthodoxy, and further ruled that his election to eldership was legal and proper. Haan refused, however, to submit to the decision of Classis. A bit later in the session he continued his attack on the Dutch Reformed Church, registering complaint about the way the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Brunswick. For this spirit and behavior, Haan was severely rebuked by Classis Holland. An account of this appears in Art. 12 of the Minutes of Classis Holland of April 2, 1856 (cf. pages 204-208). It may be noted that these minutes were composed and written by the Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, Clerk of the Classis. The headings which appear above the following quotations are part of the minutes.

Haan's Slander of the Church

From various sides voices are heard complaining of the church-disturbing seed which De Haan [Gijsbert Haan is meant — Ed.] sowed in the urch against the Classis, the ministers and the itch Church of America; which accusation Haan nies, but the same is confirmed by pointing out at in the churches with which Haan came into conct, and where people were willing to listen to aan, their minds were filled with suspicion; that aan, while there was preaching in Vriesland, ssed by the church to have a talk with the susnded and separated Smit, in order to persuade m not [to unite] with the Scotch people, but that should remain unaffiliated, as the seceded congretion, which is proposed by him in the churches as duty in opposition to the Classis; [and] that De aan's friends bring forth the fruit of his teachg, since they separate themselves from the church-

Haan's Defense

De Haan contends that he, by doctrine and example, opposes secession, but that he has always been in doubt as to whether the Dutch Reformed Church is the [true] church; because he had heard the most unfavorable testimonies, with regard to the contrary of which one could not be convinced, on account of lack of acquaintance with the language, and that other people, as little as he, could be sure of it.

Van Hees

Brother Van Hees requests brother De Haan not to say this, because, at least so far as he himself was concerned, he could say with full certainty that he knew her to be the old pure Reformed Church. Other people appeal to the knowledge of De Haan, that he knew that there [in the Dutch Reformed Church — Ed.] they adhered to the Reformed confessional standards; that also the delegates to the meetings of Synod had found [there] and among the professors the strongest attachment to the Reformed doctrine.

Van de Luister

Elder Van de Luister, one of the delegates, declares that at the time he visited the Synod and the seminary he became fully convinced that the Old Dutch Church of this country rests upon the pure foundation of the Reformed Church; that there are, to be sure, cases of laxity in the maintaining of discipline, but that that is something to work at.

The ministerial delegates declare that they not only found orthodoxy, but even were made ashamed and were stirred up, so that they were compelled to esteem them higher than ourselves.

Van Raalte

Van Raalte testifies that he heard an earnest attack upon the errors of the German Reformed Church; that he has seen discipline maintained even againist ministers; that he has heard, at that Synodical assembly, an explanation and defense of the Reformed system of church government such as he had never heard [before]; yea, that it had even already happened that from that side apprehension has been expressed to him whether we were

strict enough in the exercise of discipline, and whether we had not brought along too much out of the old State Church; [and he] points out that all the sympathy which we received here results from the belief that we adhered to the truth and suffered for the same.

Yntema Account "Succinct Tract"

Elder Yntema presents a brief account of the doctrine and government of this Old Dutch Church, published by order of the Synod for information in those mission fields in which the Dutch Church was unknown. This was read in Dutch by Rev. Van Raalte, from the contents of which it appeared that the old formula of subscription for signing [the confession] had been retained, as also that ministers are under obligation to preach the catechism, etc, by which, accordingly, all feel entirely satisfied, excepting brother Haan, who brings forward a booklet by seceders[1] against that Dutch Church.

Haan Brochure of the True Dutch Church

Van Raalte points out that this booklet was already something like thirty years old, that the "Succinct Account," which had been read, was of 1848, and was provided, indeed, with Synodical authority, that surely the church must be judged by the acts of those assemblies in which the church was represented; that he also had investigated the matter of that secession, and that he had been informed that in the southern portion of the Dutch Church there never had been manifested any departure from the Dutch confessional standards, but that, on the contrary, in those congregations, of people of Holland origin, they had remained very much attached to the Reformed doctrine, even during the time, thirty or forty years ago, when America was inundated with the German theology, and that this southern portion has constantly exercised a saving influence upon the northern portion, consisting of congregations composed [of people]from all kinds of countries, in which they did not show themselves to be so attached to the Dutch confessional standards; that therefore there never was any reason for the secession that took place some thirty years ago; which, however, resulted from personal considerations.

Some Demand Confession

A few of the brethren from Vriesland and Drenthe point out to Haan that he ought to confess [his sin] on account of the occasion he had given f stumbling and offense. Haan contradicts this, a demands to know wherein he has sinned. It pointed out to him that what has been brought f ward, with regard to his conduct in spreading u rest in the congregations, whereby some withdr themselves, his behavior with the deposed minist Smit, etc.; but Haan says he has given offense to one, and has caused no one to stumble. He is co fronted [with the question] whether it is no s against love to live constantly in suspicion a misconstruction of the brethern, to seize up current reports against the brethern, to rej the testimony of the delegates of the Classis, a to scatter abroad such suspicions; and wheth he can defend his writing to Holland [i. e., t Netherlands — Ed.] about the Classis against t charge of suspecting and trampling under foot t brethren — whereby people there come to thi that ministers who are called, if they go the [*i. e.*, to the United States — Ed.], will have plunge into even the most difficult conflict w the Classis.

Kleijn Proposes a Day of Prayer About the Mat

Rev. Klein adds to this an earnest brothe admonition, and shows the destructive nature that spirit of suspicion, and its unyielding a incurable character; for which reason he propos that a day of prayer against that spirit of tra pling under foot the brethren be publicly cal for. After that, he leads the assembly in pray to the throne of Grace, that the King of the Chur may preserve his Church in truth, peace and lo Thereupon he proposes that the 10th of April set aside for a day of prayer, which was adopt by the assembly.

After Haan's protest against Daalman was rejec and after his further complaints against the Dutch formed Church met with severe rebukes and the appo ment of a day of public prayer "against that spirit trampling under foot the brethren," it is not surpris that he found continuing membership in the Dutch formed Church quite impossible. Shortly after the m ing of Classis Holland on April 2, 1856, Haan separa from the Dutch Reformed Church in Grand Rap Michigan.

Rev. N. H. Dosker, in his history, *De Hollands Gereformeerde Kerk in Amerika*, gives the following count of Haan's secession by reference to the *Minu* of the Grand Rapids Church:

On the day of the installation [of Daalman, obj of Haan's protest — Ed.], April 6, 1856, Haan w still in the church in the morning, but in the aft noon, when the installation was to take place, held a separate religious service with his follow in his own home. In the consistory meeting day following, J. Gelok [deacon who had join Haan's protest — Ed.] took leave, lay down office, and resigned his membership.

At the meeting of the Consistory, held the 1 of April, Letters of Secession were handed in fr

1. Reference is to the group which seceded in 1822 from the Dutch Reformed Church and called themselves True Dutch Reformed Church. For a brief account of the origins of this church, and Gijsbert Haan's relation to it, see article by D. L. Van Halsema, "Hopkins, Hackensack, Haan," in *The Reformed Journal*, Jan. 1957, pp. 8, 9.

Haan, J. Gelok, G. Grootveld, and G. E. J. Ham. the minutes of that meeting this comment ap-ars: "Haan and his followers no longer speak out their objections concerning the election of aalman, but about the Holland Reformed Church, d although they cannot say that it is no longer e Church, they nevertheless believe that they ve freedom to separate from her."

The following references to Haan's secession appear in the *Minutes of Classis Holland*, October 9, 1856, pp. 225, 226:

Secession of Haan

Art. 20. Rev. Van Den Bosch[2] asks whether the se of G. Haan, of Grand Rapids, must not be ted upon, and [says] that he hears complaints out the failure to do anything about it; where-on he, and also the entire assembly, are *formally* formed by the delegates from Grand Rapids that aan and some other persons have seceded from the urch.

Discipline for Haan

Art. 22. An elder from Holland, Wilterdink, ks whether no discipline is to be imposed on Haan, who has shown himself to be one who mples under foot the brethren; which question [gives occasion] to some of the brethren to give expression to their misgivings about the sparing of Haan and the neglect of discipline . . . Concerning Haan, the assembly declares that since he has once seceded, it has nothing more to judge.

At the same Classis meeting, however, another complaint was registered against the Dutch Reformed Church, this time about the use of hymns in public worship. This complaint came from the congregation at Graafschap, Michigan, and is recorded in Art. 29 of the *Minutes* of the same Classis.

Graafschap's Objection to the Dutch Reformed Church

Art. 29. By the overseers of Graafschap an objection is presented against the Dutch Reformed Church in America, namely, that it uses hymns. Rev. Van Raalte gives some information about that and points out that the Reformed Churches in all countries at all times have had hymns, and still have them, and that those hymns are not to be compared to those of the Netherlands [which are] frequently mutilated, and are forced [upon the churches].

This explanation apparently did not satisfy the church at Graafschap, however. This and other complaints continued to be registered against the Dutch Reformed Church. The result was that after the secession of Haan, several other secessions occurred, and were registered at the meeting of Classis Holland held on April 8, 1857. The Secession documents, together with Van Raalte's reply to the objections which they contained, will be reproduced in the next issue of *The Reformed Journal.*

2. This is the Rev. Koene Vanden Bosch, who had only ently come from the Netherlands, and had been received o Classis as minister of the Noordeloos congregation at Classis meeting of August 20, 1856. This same Rev. nden Bosch joined the secession of 1857, and was for eral years the only minister in the seceded church.

LETTERS TO THE JOURNAL

s:

t is my conviction that the truth is t the opposite of what Dr. George b wrote in the November issue of *e Reformed Journal.* May I state s here very briefly?

Dr. Stob does not agree with the ong stand Synod took against neu-l, or better, ungodly organizations. d he writes that the Canadian urches are to blame for this strong nd, that on account of them we are a critical condition. He is afraid cussion with these brethren is al-st impossible; they are sure the way y say is right. He is against a ristian labor organization. The thren should listen to us in Amer-; we are here, not in Holland. They out of step, they should join the rldly unions.

This is to me the same as when a n of a family goes to war. While is gone the family becomes loose, es to church only once on Sunday, they use slang in the home, and even curse sometimes. The son comes home and notices this and starts to complain; but the father upbraids him and says you are wrong, listen to us, you do not understand; we are right, get in step, do as we do.

Does not Dr. Stob know that as a whole our Fathers in this country, and I am almost sure his own father, talked just like the Canadian brethren, just like Abraham Kuyper did fifty years ago, never to join a worldly labor union; identically the same as Revs.

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Letters — Continued

Vander Meer, Van Andel and Speelman did, and it is still in the hearts of our people as a whole. Only, while many of our fathers here joined against their will, the younger generation is beginning to defend it.

So instead of upbraiding Canada, Synod appreciated their stand, and with a great majority accepted their stand. Therefore, we as a church, also Dr. Stob, should be thankful.

The battle was sore in the land, the soldiers fell by the thousands, our own C.L.A. began to compromise and here God sent reinforcement from across the sea.

May we now take courage, strengthen the ranks, go a little farther and say that it is impossible that a Christian joined to our blessed Lord, can also be joined to such an ungodly organization as the C.I.O. or A.F.L.

If any are in doubt about this last part read last year's August *Reader's Digest* and see what the world itself says about these organizations.

I agree with Dr. Stob that Mr. Gritter didn't state the aim of the C.L.A. just right. The brother does not know it all either; but that he is right in principle no one here or over the whole globe should deny.

Dr. Stob asked, "What is the objective of C.L.A.?"

1. All Christians must join the C.L.A.

2. So they may not be joined to Christ and the devil.

3. So they may check by example the wickedness of the worldly organizations.

4. That they may, though a small group, like the seven churches in Asia Minor, be a living testimony over against these organizations.
That is Scripture concrete.

The reward — that our Father is pleased with us, and that doing this we may be called worthy to suffer for His name.

So we may say with the lady who was missionary in India for fifty years:
Come ill, come woe, the cross, the crown,
The sunlight or the thunder,
I fling my soul and body down,
For God to plow it under.

D. Kort

SIRS:

Enclosed please find my check for $2.50 for the renewal of my subscription.

Please allow me to express hearty appreciation of the article "Heritage and Destiny" by Dr. Eugene Osterhaven. Such an article calls us to some sane and serious thinking during our centennial year. Every member of our church should read it for real stimulation. After reading so much about the past and receiving so many self-paid compliments, it is refreshing to read this excellent contribution. May God make us more mindful of our destiny in this world at this hour.

In His service,
Fred Van Houten

SIRS:

Many thanks for the eloquent tributes to Henry Zylstra. I have read also the fascinating story, "Pages from the Past." This is no doubt bad French, but it is as I recall it, "Le plus ce change, le plus ce meme." VanderWeele's review of *Andersonville* also is excellent.

Sincerely,
John J. DeBoer
University of Illinois
Champaign, Ill.

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